

Marine Corps Birthday Ball Checklist for the Commander's Spouse

In the Days Prior to the Ball

- ✓ Walk through the venue if possible, or otherwise familiarize yourself with the layout
- ✓ Review the final draft of the program before it goes to print, if possible (It's always good to have another set of eyes.)
- ✓ Decide with your spouse if you will host a pre-ball reception; if so, prepare and send invitations and plan the event
- ✓ Plan your attire, keeping in mind that your dress and overall presentation signal your respect for the proud tradition and history of the Marine Corps and this event



Day Of/ Pre-Ceremony

- ✓ Assist with pick-up and greeting of Guest of Honor (GOH)/spouse as appropriate
- ✓ Host pre-ball reception, if scheduled
- ✓ Ensure GOH/spouse are well taken care of, i.e., that they have an escort at all times as appropriate and a beverage if they want one; make introductions at pre-ball reception
- ✓ Remind your spouse....time your arrival at the venue so you are not the first ones there but that you have time to meet and greet before being seated
- ✓ At the ball venue, prior to the beginning of the ceremony, greet as many people as possible, stay with GOH's spouse unless other arrangements are made; make introductions, compliment, and smile, smile, smile!

During the Ceremony

- ✓ Be aware that people will take queues from you more than you realize; show interest and reverence during the ceremony; avoid side discussions, etc.
- ✓ Listen to the announcer
- ✓ Guests will be looking to you for signals and what to do; confidently take the lead and do not watch others
 - Stand with hand over the heart as Colors pass in front of you (coming and going)
 - Stand with hand over the heart during the National Anthem (it is fine to sing along)
 - Applaud and stand when the Guest of Honor finishes his/her remarks

Dinner

- ✓ Bon Appetit....keeping in mind table manners/proper dining etiquette!

After the Ceremony and Dinner

- ✓ Have fun
- ✓ On the dance floor--do not give guests anything unbecoming to talk about afterwards or worse, an embarrassing moment caught on camera
- ✓ Keep your shoes on at all times (bring a pair of flats/ballet-type shoes to change into if you think your feet will start to hurt)
- ✓ When GOH/spouse leave the ball, thank them again and see them out with your spouse; ensure they have transportation if needed

A Few General Tips and Reminders:

- ✓ Remember at all times that you are a reflection of your spouse and his/her command at this event
- ✓ While it is your night too, allow your spouse to enjoy this special evening with other Marines; give him/her some breathing room to celebrate with fellow Marines; pose for photos, etc. If your Marine ends up on the other side of the ballroom, it may be dutiful from time to time to go stand by his/her side (always ensuring the GOH and his/her spouse are accompanied and tended to)
- ✓ Names.....be straightforward and tactful if you forget, i.e., "I've just drawn a blank, please help me out!"
- ✓ Circulate, smile, and introduce yourself. Wish Marines a Happy Birthday, tell them how sharp they look, compliment the ladies, and be an overall Ambassador of Goodwill!
- ✓ Limit your alcohol intake
- ✓ Keep your beverage in your left hand so that you do not offer a cold, wet handshake
- ✓ Refrain from complaining aloud about anything--the line, the food, the service, the music....

Have a wonderful time at the Ball!

